

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the courtesy extended by the Examiner in reviewing and discussing proposed claim amendments subsequent to the mailing of the Office Action. Applicant believes that the claims as now presented are clearly allowable.

In the April 12 Office Action, all of Claims 1-37 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) in view of a patent to Kisakibaru (US 6,670,290), and further in view of a CDC Health Advisory and other secondary references. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action makes reference to a “work surface” disclosed in the Kisakibaru patent. Applicant’s attorney called the Examiner to determine exactly what portion of the system in Kisakibaru was regarded as being a “work surface”. The Examiner advised that the floor of the chamber in Kisakibaru was interpreted as being a work surface through which air was drawn.

In an effort to secure fast allowance of the claims presented, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 15 such that the claimed work surface is recited as being positioned at a predetermined distance above the floor of the sealed area. In addition, Claim 1 was amended to more clearly recite that the claimed system is a mail processing system (Claim 15 already contained limitations directed to a mail operation). The Examiner agreed, in an earlier discussion, that these changes would be sufficient to overcome the rejections of the claims under 35 USC 103(a) in view of Kisakibaru and the various secondary references cited.

Applicant has made these changes in order to advance the application to issuance, and the changes are made without prejudice to the filing of a continuation or divisional application presenting claims that differ in scope. Claims 34-37 have also been herein canceled, with a view toward advancing the application to allowance. The cancellation of these claims is done without prejudice to the presentation of these or similar claims in a continuation or divisional application.

All of the grounds of rejection under 35 USC 103(a) are overcome by the amendments to Claims 1 and 15 herein, and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested. The claims are otherwise believed to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

John C. Kerins
Reg. No. 32,421

1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102-3833
Telephone: (703) 610-8627
#9221481v1